

Welch and other friends vowed to “keep it lit” for Melson, meaning to exact retribution on rival neighborhoods they blamed for his death.

Welch was shot three more times, in both ankles, the buttocks and the hip. He declines to get into specifics but admits he has been involved in “shootouts.”

“I have a chance at a peaceful life; I just don’t want to die or go to jail when I am so close.”

Welch said that in Richmond’s toughest neighborhoods, violent deaths of relatives and friends, shootouts and close calls “hang over everything.”

#### THE FUTURE

The mere notion of a future is a far cry from where Welch has been.

“Eric was on his way to prison or death, for sure,” said Sam Vaughn, an Office of Neighborhood Safety neighborhood change agent who has worked closely with Welch. “Where he is now, about to go to college, is a miracle given what he’s been through.”

Welch spends little time in the old neighborhood, knowing he could lose it all in an instant.

He plans to attend Tallahassee Community College in Florida in the fall, and he hopes to transfer to Florida A&M University. But first, he’s on his way to the Capitol.

“I am really looking forward to a new start, a place where I can be by myself and focus and not worry about my past catching up with me,” Welch said. “I feel alone here, in my neighborhood. My friends are mostly dead or incarcerated.”

#### OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

##### HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 22, 2013*

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$16,787,282,992,090.73. We’ve added \$6,160,405,943,177.65 to our debt in 4 years. This is \$6 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

#### SANDY MATA

##### HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 22, 2013*

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Sandy Mata for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Sandy Mata is a 12th grader at Jefferson High School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Sandy Mata is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Sandy Mata for winning the Arvada Wheat

Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

#### HONORING MINNESOTA STATE REPRESENTATIVE KAREN CLARK

##### HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 22, 2013*

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I had the honor of serving as a member of the Minnesota House of Representatives for eight years prior to being elected to Congress in 2000. One of my Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party colleagues from Minneapolis, State Rep. Karen Clark, was a constant and vocal champion for social justice, economic opportunity, environmental sustainability, and human rights. State Rep. Clark continues to serve in the Minnesota House, having just completed her thirty-third legislative session. Karen’s passion, determination, and commitment as a legislator were recently displayed for the entire nation to admire as she authored legislation and lead the push for marriage equality. That legislation passed the legislature, was signed into law, and now Minnesota is the twelfth state in the union to legalize same sex marriage.

Today, the White House is recognizing the achievements and contributions of ten openly lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) public officials from across the United States. One of those officials being honored is State Rep. Karen Clark, who will join a distinguished group of leaders named “Harvey Milk Champions of Change.” This is a tremendous honor for Karen and I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations on this well deserved recognition.

Throughout her career, Karen Clark has advocated and given voice to the issues and hopes of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Minnesotans. As the longest serving openly lesbian state legislator in the country, Karen has battled against discrimination, hate-crimes, and intolerance faced by LGBT Americans, yet she has always conducted herself with a spirit of openness, kindness, and courage. Karen has dedicated three decades to improving the lives of LGBT Minnesotans, but also all families in her South Minneapolis district. From LGBT youth to new African or Latino immigrants, low-income families to Native American women, Karen Clark has always been on the side of making government work for people to improve their lives.

Again, I would like to extend my congratulations and the shared sense of pride many friends, colleagues, and constituents of Karen feel as she is recognized by President Obama for her leadership. State Rep. Karen Clark is truly a national leader for LGBT Americans and a champion for all Minnesotans.

#### TRIBUTE TO BENTON AND SANDI MARKS

##### HON. TODD ROKITA

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 22, 2013*

Mr. ROKITA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an exceptional Hoosier couple, Mr. Benton and Mrs. Sandi Marks, who are being honored with the 2013 HAI-Life Distinguished Service Award by Hasten Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis. This honor is well-deserved because of their many years of philanthropic service to the Indianapolis Jewish community, as well as to the broader community.

Mr. Marks joined the Hasten Hebrew Academy Board of Directors in 1997 and has served in a number of leadership positions, including as president of the school. In the 1990s, he was president of the Bureau of Jewish Education and is the only person in the Indianapolis Jewish community to serve as president of both educational institutions. Mr. Marks also served as the president of the Jewish Federation and as Campaign Chair a record five times. He also was chairman of State of Israel Bonds for three years. Mr. Marks has served as a member of the Indiana Judicial Nominating Commission, and has donated his time locally to United Cerebral Palsy, Indiana Building Owners and Managers Association, and the Indiana Chapter of the Brown University National Secondary School Committee.

Mrs. Marks has devoted her life to education, serving on the Hasten Hebrew Academy Education Committee and as a board member of the school. She recently retired from Washington Township Schools but continues to serve the district as a school psychologist. She is a member of several women’s organizations in our community and works with the Great American Songbook Initiative at the Center for the Performing Arts in Carmel. Mrs. Marks is also a trusted friend and confidant of mine on education issues in my capacity as chairman of the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education.

Mr. and Mrs. Marks are wonderful entrepreneurs, philanthropists, and friends. I am honored to know them and look forward to our continued friendship. I know they will continue to serve as leaders in our community for many years to come.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF LUZERNE COUNTY HEAD START, INC. FOR DEDICATED AND SELFLESS SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

##### HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 22, 2013*

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Luzerne County Head Start, Inc. for recently celebrating its 48th Anniversary on Monday, May 20, 2013. For nearly half a century, the program has been serving Luzerne County and Wyoming County by providing quality prekindergarten education to children who come from low-income families. Head Start teachers work with children, and